

2007 CPT CALENDAR 2007

PEACEMAKER DELEGATIONS:

- **Arizona Borderlands:** March 1-8; May 24 - June 4
- **Colombia:** January 17-30; May 23 - June 5; July 18-31; September 26 - October 9.
- **Palestine/Israel:** January 10-22; March 19-31; May 29 - June 10; July 30 - August 11; October 16-28; November 19 - December 1.

PEACEMAKER TRAININGS:

- **Winter:** December 27, 2006 - January 27, 2007; Chicago, IL.
- **Summer:** July 16-August 16, 2007; Chicago, IL.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

- **Spring 2007:** March 22-24; Chicago, IL
- **Fall 2007:** October 11-13; Osler, Saskatchewan

Christian Peacemaker Teams

P.O. Box 6508
Chicago, IL 60680

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Signs of the Times is produced four times a year. Batches of 10 or more are available to institutions, congregations, and local groups for distribution. Any part may be used without permission. Please send CPT a copy of the reprint. Your contributions finance CPT ministries including distribution of 21,000 copies of *Signs of the Times*. The work of CPT is guided by a 15-member **STEERING COMMITTEE**: Lois Baker, Tony Brown, Ruth Buhler, Walter Franz, Elizabeth Garcia, Cliff Kindy, Susan Mark Landis, Lee McKenna duCharme, Phil Miller, William Payne, Orlando Redekopp, Sandra Rincon, Hedy Sawadsky, John Stoner, Brian Young. **CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER CORPS**: Jan Bervie, Krysta Chupp, Suzanna Collier, Anita David, Noah Dillard, Claire Evans, Mark Frey, Peggy Gish, Julian Gutierrez, Tracy Hughes, Rebecca Johnson, Kathleen Kern, Cliff Kindy, Joel Klassen, Jerry Levin, John Lynes, Rich Meyer, Anne Montgomery, Abigail Ozanne, Jessica Phillips, Doug Pritchard, Sandra Rincon, Dianne Roe, Carol Rose, Heidi Schramm, Pierre Shantz, Kathie Uhler, Stewart Vriesinga, Diana Zimmerman. **RESERVE CORPS**: 157 women and men from the U.S., Canada, Bahrain, Israel/Palestine, Philippines, England, Scotland, and New Zealand.

CPT delegation members called upon the U.S. Defense Department and weapons manufacturers to "stop production and use of depleted uranium (DU) weapons in war theaters and practice ranges." See: www.stop-du.org for more info.



DU delegation prayer vigil.

CPT-Canada

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Signs OF THE Times

CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS

Winter 2006/2007

P.O. Box 6508; Chicago, IL 60680

Vol. XVI, No. 4

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PALESTINE: STILL UNDER OCCUPATION



Israeli soldiers prevent Palestinian girls from going to school in Hebron.

CPTers in the southern West Bank report a disturbing rise in Israeli settler violence. Under the protection of large contingents of Israeli soldiers, the extremist settlers of the Hebron District are increasing their attacks on Palestinian civilians and international human rights workers. The following stories shine a spotlight on the restrictions, harassment, provocations and violence which Palestinians experience on a daily basis under Israeli occupation. The Action Alert on page 5 asks you to help intervene. Through the voices of people like you, the Israeli authorities may be motivated to prevent, rather than permit, these crimes.

SPOTLIGHT AT-TUWANI: HEADS ON STONES

by Joel Gulledge

"Your heads will be on the stones if you don't leave this place," threatened an Israeli settler from the outpost Havot Ma'on (Hill 833). Captured on a CPT video, but ignored by Israeli police, the threat against local Palestinians and internationals accompanying them is part of daily life here – and the reason for the continuous presence of international human rights workers since 2004.

FOCUS:

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Christian Peacemaker Teams is a program of active peacemaking sponsored by: Church of the Brethren, Friends United Meeting, Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church USA, Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, Congregation of St. Basil (the Basilians), Every Church a Peace Church, On Earth Peace, and Presbyterian Peace Fellowship.

A few days later, during a "routine check," I witnessed Israeli soldiers abusing my neighbor. Such abuse often ceases when soldiers become aware that internationalists are present, filming their actions.

Ancient At-Tuwani is located in the South Hebron Hills of the West Bank. Nearly 1000 Palestinians in the surrounding area reside in natural caves, living off the land and grazing their flocks of goats and sheep. The cave dwellers have no running water or electricity.

Under complete Israeli control in "Area C," many South Hebron Hills residents have suffered expulsion and the destruction of their homes at the hands of the Israeli military. Israeli settlers have attacked villagers and human rights workers and destroyed olive trees. The villagers' livestock and single water cistern have been poisoned – an act that Robert Kennedy, Director of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), called "a form of chemical warfare."

Israel's concrete barrier along route 317 near At-Tuwani restricts villagers' access to their farmland and to vital services such as health clinics, education and markets in nearby cities.

Multiple UN reports describe the South Hebron Hills communities as "once self-sustainable, now having one of the highest poverty levels in the West Bank" due to the Israeli Occupation. The prominent Israeli human rights group B'Tselem reports that the region's "proximity to the Green Line and sparse Palestinian population make the southern Hebron hills a 'natural' candidate for annexation [by Israel], as well as an attractive site for settlement that will create a contiguous Jewish presence on both sides of the Green Line [the 1967 boundary between the West Bank and Israel]."

The villagers of Sussia have lived in tents since 1999 when the Israeli military crushed their cave homes. I traveled there to visit a village elder who'd been assaulted by masked settlers. Settlers had also strewn metal spikes across the road, puncturing three tires of a truck carrying desperately needed water to the community.

Back in At-Tuwani, my neighbor served tea as we watched his children play near their home. "It's hard watching my children grow up under the same occupation I did," he says. "I don't want them to live in fear."

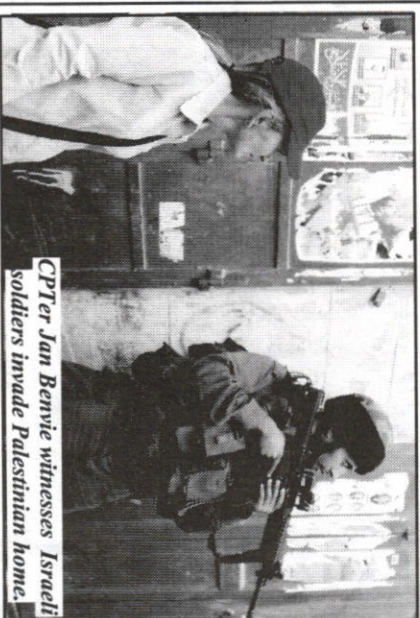
SPOTLIGHT HEBRON: STRANGERS IN MY HOME

by Jan Benwie

Until recently, no one had ever entered my home without my permission. I have always had the right to say "no" when someone came to my door. That all changed when a group of Israeli soldiers appeared at the apartment I share with other CPT members in the Old City of Hebron.

The soldiers knocked until someone answered. We were reluctant to let them in. They listened to what we had to say, but then they pushed their way through. We do not allow people to bring weapons into our home and asked them to leave their guns at the door, but they refused. Ultimately we had no choice.

Their visit was short. They were polite and civil, but that didn't make me feel any less powerless. After they left I could not relax. That night, I could not sleep because unwelcome strangers had been in my room.



CPTer Jan Benwie witnesses Israeli soldiers invade Palestinian home.

The very next day I witnessed a group of Israeli soldiers invading a Palestinian home. They did not knock. They forced their way in, locking the door behind them. The family had no choice; they were trapped in their home with armed soldiers.

The soldiers were rude, they made obscene comments, they shouted at family members, they moved furniture and emptied cupboards and drawers onto the floor, they pulled covers from the bed. After two and a half hours they left, leaving behind weeping women, bruised men and a ransacked home.

PEACE BRIEFS

Christian Peace Witness for Iraq: a broad coalition of Protestant and Catholic Peace Fellowships and organizations are planning a witness at the White House in Washington, DC on March 13, 2007 to put forward a positive vision of genuine security based on Jesus' nonviolent call to build affirming, border-crossing relationships with one another. The event will call for an end to the U.S. occupation of Iraq, restoration of veterans' benefits, a long-term commitment to the reconstruction of Iraq, an end to torture, and attention to questions of poverty and injustice here in the U.S. See www.christianpeacewitness.org.

International Day to Shut Down Guantánamo: January



11 marks the 5 year anniversary of the first prisoners being brought to Guantánamo. Join peace activists in Washington, DC

for a march, press conferences and civil disobedience or organize an action in your home community. See www.witnessstorture.org.

Colors from Palestine, a 2007 wall calendar dedicated to the memory of novelist, short-story writer, painter and dramatist Ghassan Kanafani, is available at www.resistanceart.com. In his stories, Kanafani often used the desert and its heat as a symbol for the plight of the Palestinian people. On July 9, 1972, Kanafani, age 36, and his young niece Lamis were killed by a bomb planted in his car by the Israeli Mossad.

Alternative Gifts International includes CPT in its 2006/2007 catalogue. Go online to www.algifts.org and scroll down to the first listing below their mission statement for CPT's entry, "Love Your Enemy / Palestine, Israel."

Letters LETTERS

Thank you for the 2007 calendar with the reminder of a hymn I like a lot. It now contains new meaning because of Tom Fox and all of you.

Mary Beyler
Hokkaido, Japan

When Christianity seems to reduce itself to an institutionalized conservatism, I find hope in the work of CPT and others. CPT is for me "salt" for the "church." I hope that one day all those who call themselves Christians will stand up for peace, justice and diversity.

Rev. Johan Maertens
Gent, Belgium

Norman Kember, et al. do not want to testify against their abductors. I am against the war, too, and I understand the whole forgiveness thing for your own sense of peace, however you have to understand that the kidnapers must face the consequences!

Stephanie Porter
Vaughan, ON

[RE: "Strangers In My Home," p. 5] Your compassion for the Palestinian people is lovely. I appreciate as well the griet you carry for the Israeli soldiers who have deserted their humanity, evidenced by their ability to invade a home with such abandon.

Jeri Gunderson
Metro Manila, Philippines

Your web site portrays the Israeli government in a very negative light. Most of the pictures and articles represent Israeli aggression; it would be only fair to display accounts of Arab aggression which is also prevalent. You are entitled to your political view, but I feel that your pictures are unbalanced as to the situation in Israel.

Justin Morris
Los Angeles, CA

Your skills of calmness, respect and friendship are both the gifts that CPT teams bring to communities in crisis around the world and your greatest protection within them. Thank you for your courage and witness to peace.

Dai Williams
Surrey, UK

ARIZONA: INCREASING MILITARIZATION by CPT Reservist Rick Ufford-Chase, Tucson, AZ

For those of us living on the US-Mexico border, this year's steady news stream of government efforts to "seal the border" feels like a tidal wave. We hear talk of a "virtual fence" of sensors, cameras, and high tech equipment to secure the desert. The number of Border Patrol personnel is up 30% in the last five years, and is projected to grow from twelve to eighteen thousand by the end of 2008. Six thousand National Guard troops have been stationed on the border since last spring. In October, President Bush authorized the construction of a 700-mile wall across southern Arizona.

In November, Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio (Phoenix metro area) announced that he is finalizing an agreement that will give his police officers authority to enforce immigration law, defying the traditional barriers between the mandate of local law enforcers and that

As part of its larger campaign to stop the production of depleted uranium (DU) weapons, the CPT Northern Indiana Regional Group (CPT-NI) hosted a 10-day delegation to DU production facilities. The group started with meetings and several days of vigil at the Aerojet Ordnance plant in Jonesborough, TN, then traveled to the Alliant Tech plant in Rocket Center, WV to continue their prayer vigil on behalf of those who are negatively impacted by DU contamination.

MY DISCOVERY OF DU

by Juanita Shenk, CPT-NI, Elkhart, IN

I first learned about depleted uranium (DU) while visiting Iraq with CPT in February-March 2003. The addition of DU to ammunition gives it much greater penetrating and lethal explosive power. The remaining contamination also wreaks havoc on the health of civilian populations in affected areas.

Dr. Alim Yacoub, Dean of the Al-Mustansiriya College of Medicine in Baghdad, told us that his studies showed a sharp increase in the incidence of birth defects and anomalies, childhood leukemia, and can-

of Federal government immigration officers. What will happen when large numbers of people in the community are afraid to call the police for help?

On November 23, a friend from the Samaritans (a volunteer search and rescue patrol) called to report that she had a run-in with guards from Wackenhut, a private security firm accused of egregious human rights violations in the past. Apparently, they now have the contract to provide detention buses to remove migrants picked up in the desert.

Advocates for migrants are gravely concerned that the accelerating militarization of the border creates fertile ground for abuses against people detained for violations of immigration law.

This winter, CPT will work with local humanitarian groups to standardize procedures for documentation, denunciation, and publication of any abuses committed by the tens of thousands of officers now authorized to apprehend migrants.

cerous tumors in southern Iraq linked to DU exposure during the 1990-1991 Gulf War.

For instance, in the decade following that war, from 1990 to 2000, the proportion of children under age 5 with leukemia in the Basra area more than quadrupled from 13% to 57%. In northern Iraq, cancers and leukemias had not increased in the same way.

The effects are not limited to Iraqis. The Associated Press reported on eight veterans from the current war who believe their maladies are a direct result of contact with DU weapons ("Sickened Iraq Vets Cite Depleted Uranium," by Deborah Hastings, Associated Press Wire Service, 09/12/06).

Seeing so many Iraqi children - deformed and helpless from birth, living in orphanages because parents didn't know how to cope with their defects, or laying connected to medicine bottles in hospitals, mothers languishing at their bedsides - only reinforced my determination to work against the use of DU.

Members of the November 24 - December 3 delegation were: Randy Bond, (Beulah, MI), Cliff Kindy (North Manchester, IN) Ellen Kling (Moundridge, KS), Murray Lumley (Toronto, ON), John Mueller (Kansas City, KS), Denis Murphy (Chicago, IL), Jerry Park (Mt. Ranier, MD), Philip Rhoads (Overland Park, KS).

When I returned after visiting the family I could not relax. That night, I could not sleep. I kept thinking of the Palestinian family. I remembered how I had felt the night before, after a more mild invasion. I wondered how the family could ever feel safe in their home again or how they could sleep in their beds after that evening's violation.

SPOTLIGHT BEIT UMMAR: THROWING STONES

CPT reported previously on the Israeli army's middle-of-the-night abduction and two-week imprisonment of the Mayor of Beit Ummar, an agricultural village near Hebron. In a recent visit with the Mayor, CPTers learned that the harassment of Beit Ummar residents continues.

Twice in two weeks soldiers awakened the Mayor at 1:00am, blindfolded him and drove him to an area where they said children were throwing stones. They wanted him to make them stop.

"When you are killing our kids, you can't stop stone-throwing," the Mayor responded. "I can speak to them, but they have their own authority."

The soldiers threatened to "arrest, hit, or kill" if the kids didn't stop throwing stones. The Mayor offered another option: "Don't come into our town, and they won't throw stones at you."

He told CPTers that the new construction of Route 60 between the Israeli settlements of Gush Etzion and Halhoul will confiscate more than 1,000 dunams (250 acres) of fertile land through Beit Ummar. Some farmers will lose all their land. Palestinians will not be permitted to travel on or cross the highway.

"In our own town they don't allow us to live as we wish," the Mayor said. Israelis closed the road to the wholesale market with concrete blocks. "What use is a market without a road?" he said, "and they even bulldozed the back ways to the market, severing water and electrical lines." Once destroyed, Beit Ummar workers may not repair the line without Israeli permission, which is difficult to get. The Mayor described how water running onto Route 60 from the broken pipe causes accidents. "And even though the water is lost," he said, "Beit Ummar must pay Israel for it."

SPOTLIGHT TEL RUMEIDA: SETTLER ASSAULTS by Jerry Levin

On Saturday, November 18, several thousand ultra-nationalist Jews arrived in Hebron for a religious celebration. Some of them threw stones and bottles at Palestinian residents in the Hebron neighborhood of Tel Rumeida, injuring a three-year old child. They also intimidated Palestinian children on their way home from school.

At about 4:00 p.m., CPTers Sally Britton and John Lynes and five other international human rights activists arrived at the Dubboya Street checkpoint. The CPTers waited for a Palestinian boy they had been asked to escort to his home in Tel Rumeida. The other internationals went on through the checkpoint where a large contingent of soldiers and about one hundred settlers had congregated.

Moments later, Britton noticed one of the internationals on the ground. The CPTers rushed through the checkpoint to where nineteen-year-old Swedish nonviolent human rights activist, Tove Johansson, lay. Her face was bloody from a lacerated eyebrow and her left cheek was swollen. According to witnesses, the settlers chanted death threats in Hebrew, then began spitting and kicking the internationals. One of them broke an empty bottle on Johansson's face.

While Johansson's companions attempted to stop the bleeding, Israeli military and police allowed the attackers to remain, cheering and clapping. Some members of the mob stood close enough to have photographs taken of them next to Johansson's wounded face while they gave the cameras a gleeful "thumbs up" sign. Doctors at a hospital in Jerusalem later determined her cheekbone was broken.

When Britton asked one soldier why the settlers cheered, he responded that it was because "someone has been hurt." Then he added, "They are sick."

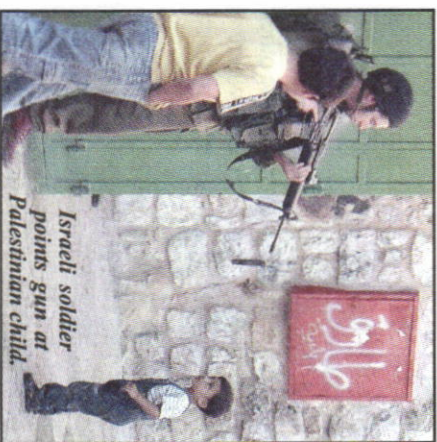
A Jewish onlooker approached the group huddled around the injured woman and said, "Excuse me. I am sorry. This shouldn't have happened."

Nevertheless, these settlers continue to have Israeli government support and full military protection.

HEBRON: "SEASONS"

by Abigail Ozanne

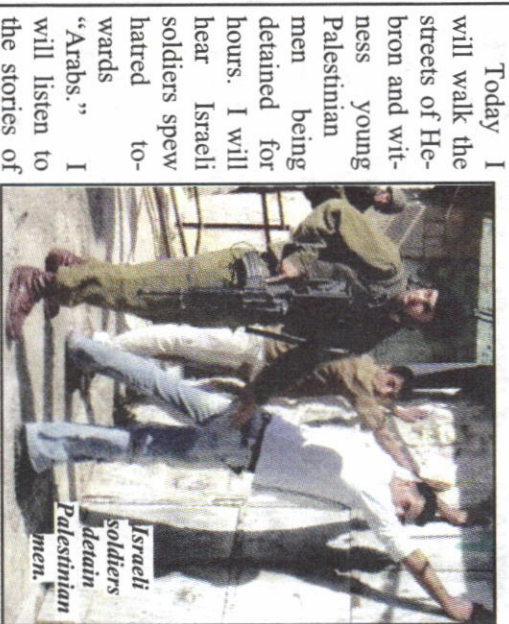
I listen to the sparrows chirping outside the window and imagine my backyard in Minnesota, the leaves turning red and yellow, the apples ripening, the rust-colored chrysanthemums enduring the ever-cooler mornings. A deep peace fills me, momentarily driving out the tension of living in an occupied land.



Israeli soldier points gun at Palestinian child.

A plane roars over my head and I remember that it is not flying passengers to the Minneapolis airport, but possibly heading on a mission to bomb Palestinian civilians in Gaza. I hear cars on the road – Israelis driving down an Israeli-only road in the center of Palestinian Hebron. I hear the call to prayer from the mosque and wonder if Palestinian worshippers will be stopped and searched before they can enter the Old City. I look out the window and see the barbed wire of a military installation crowning the building opposite.

This is not a crisp autumn day in the Midwest. The days are hot. The season is the Muslim Ramadan and Jewish Succoth. The signs of the season are not the turning of leaves, but the closing of gates, the appearance of metal detectors on the road to Friday prayers, the flocks of Jewish tourists parading through the streets of this Palestinian city. For me it is a season of sorrow at the oppression of innocents.



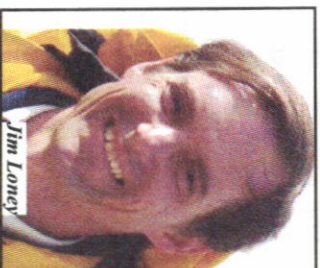
Israeli soldiers detain Palestinian men.

Today I will walk the streets of Hebron and witness young Palestinian men being detained for hours. I will hear Israeli soldiers spew hatred towards "Arabs." I will listen to the stories of Palestinian families whose homes have been invaded, their possessions thrown about, their men beaten or imprisoned.

I breathe air heavy with the weight of injustice. The sparrows call outside the window. I remember that I am here, in Palestine, living under occupation.

CPTers serving the Palestine teams (Hebron and at-Tuwani) September-November were: Jan Benvie (Fife, Scotland), Sally Britton (Norwich, VT), Cynthia Burnside (Madison, WI), Matt Chandler (Beaverton, OR), Claire Evans (Chicago, IL), John Funk (Armstrong, BC), Christina Gibb (Dunedin, New Zealand), Joel Guldage (Chicago, IL), Laurie Hadden (Markham, ON), Donna Hicks (Durham, NC), Maureen Jack (Fife, Scotland), Jerry Levin (Birmingham, AL), JoAnne Lingie (Indianapolis, IN), John Lynes (Sussex, England), Barbara Martens (Ruhven, ON), Cathy McLean (Alisa Craig, ON), Rich Meyer (Millersburg, IN - Project Support Coordinator), Abigail Ozanne (Falcon Heights, MN), Dianne Roe (Corning, NY), Heidi Schramm (Lindenhurst, IL), Sarah Scruggs (Washington, DC), Char Smith (Gibson City, IL), Kathie Uhler (New York, NY), Diana Zimmerman (Baltimore, MD)

Delegation members were: October 7-19 - Mary Ann Brownlee (Nowi, MD), Laura Graham (Seattle, WA), Donald Haszfeld (San Francisco, CA), Susan Kerin (Rockville, MD), Tabitha Krocker (London, ON), Veronica Lowe (East Sussex, England), Seneca Miller (Tempe, AZ), David Leeper Moss (Chico, CA), Sean O'Neill (Springfield, OH), Mary Lawrence Scanlan (Allegany, NY), Margaret Tegenfeldt (Pacific Beach, WA), Mary Wendeln (Washington, DC); November 19 - December 1 - Patricia Chaffee (St. Louis, MO), Dora-Marie Goulet and Kathryn Thiesen (London, England), Jill Grabberg (Olympia, WA), Joshua Hough (Talent, OR), Logan Laiuri (Tustin, CA), Ryan Lehman (Holtzspole, PA), Ilse Miltstieph (Bielefeld, Germany), Andrew Oliver (Hoguin, WA), Elce Redmond (Chicago, IL), Annerose Schultze (Düsseldorf, Germany), Michael Thomas (Lebanon, NH).



Jim Loney



Norman Kember



Harnet Sooden

retribution. Should those who have been charged with holding us hostage be brought to trial and convicted, we ask that they be granted all possible leniency. We categorically lay aside any rights we may have over them.

In our view, the catastrophic levels of violence and the lack of effective protection of human rights in Iraq is inextricably linked to the US-led invasion and occupation. As for many others, the actions of our kidnappers were part of a cycle of violence they themselves experienced. While this is no way justifies what the men charged with our kidnapping are alleged to have done, we feel this must be considered in any potential judgment.

Forgiveness is an essential part of Sikh, Christian and Muslim teaching. Gurnu Nanak Dev Ji, the first of the Sikh Gurus said, "‘Forgiveness’ is my mother..." and, "Where there is forgiveness, there is God."

Jesus said, "For if you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." And of Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) it is told that once, while preaching in the city of Ta'if, he was abused, stoned and driven out of the city. An angel appeared to him and offered to crush the city between the two surrounding mountains if he ordered him to do so, whereupon the Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Him) said, "No. Maybe from them or their offspring will come good deeds."

Through the power of forgiveness, it is our hope that good deeds will come from the lives of our captors, and that we will all learn to reject the use of violence. We believe those who use violence against others are themselves harmed by the use of violence.

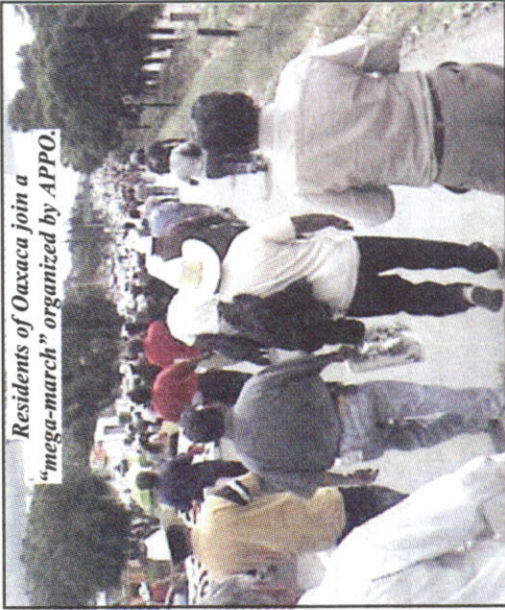
Kidnapping is a capital offence in Iraq and we understand that some of our captors could be sentenced to death. The death penalty is an irrevocable judgment. It erases all possibility that those who have harmed others, even seriously, can yet turn to good. We categorically oppose the death penalty.

By this commitment to forgiveness, we hope to plant a seed that one day will bear the fruits of healing and reconciliation for us, our captors, the peoples of Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States, and most of all, Iraq. We look forward to the day when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is respected by all the world's people.

BACK IN IRAQ

A small team of CPTers returned to northern Iraq on November 3, after a seven-week break for retreat, consultations, and home leave. Our Iraqi advisors say that it is still not possible for the team to join them in Baghdad because the security situation there continues to deteriorate. An Iraqi colleague of the team was kidnapped November 19 but was released 9 days later with some injuries.

Meanwhile, the team continues to explore possibilities for CPT work in the north. They are meeting with a wide variety of people involved in building civil society, renewing contacts with the Muslim Peacemaker Teams, and considering parameters for future CPT delegations in the region. CPTers serving the Iraq team September-November were: Jan Benvie (Fife, Scotland), Anita David (Chicago, IL), Peggy Gish (Athens, OH), Anne Montgomery (New York, NY), Maxine Nash (Waukon, IL), Doug Pritchard (Toronto, ON - Project Support Coordinator), Will VanWagenen (Provo, UT)



Residents of Oaxaca join a "mega-march" organized by APPO.

Indymedia journalist, Brad Will, on October 27 as he filmed an attack on protestors.

With media attention focused on the December 1 inauguration of the new Mexican President, Felipe Calderón, violent repression in Oaxaca escalated. According to the Oaxaca Solidarity Network, 17 people have been killed since the protests began in May. Hundreds of demonstrators have been arrested and Amnesty International reports widespread use of torture and beatings at detention centers.

For her part, Carrión plans to return to Oaxaca very soon. "After 514 years of repression [of indigenous peoples] we are finally taking back the central square. I can't leave my land and my people. I need to go back."

ACTION: Peace and Human Rights groups in Mexico are calling on international supporters to pressure Mexican authorities to stop the violence and respect human rights. Please contact: 1) Mexican President Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa; Residencia Oficial de los Pinos; Casa Miguel Alemán; Col. San Miguel Chapultepec; México, DF 11850; Tel: 011-52-55-2-789-1100; Fax: 011-52-55-5-277-2376; 2) Attorney General Lic. Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza - Procuraduría General de la República; Av. Paseo de la Reforma #211-213; Col. Cuauhtémoc; Delegación Cuauhtémoc; México DF 06500; www.pgr.gob.mx/index.asp.

For more information see David Bacon's "Oaxaca's Dangerous Teachers" at dollarsandsense.org/archives/2006/0906bacon.html

IRAQ: THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

One year after their abduction in Baghdad, CPTer Jim Loney (Canada) and delegation members Norman Kember (England) and Harmeet Sooden (New Zealand) reunited in London. They issued the following statement on December 8 in response to requests to testify against their alleged captors facing trial in Iraq.

We three, members of a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation to Iraq, were kidnapped on November 26, 2005 and held for 118 days before being freed by British and American forces on March 23, 2006. Our friend and colleague, Tom Fox, an American citizen and full-time member of the CPT team working in Baghdad at the time, was kidnapped with us and murdered on March 9, 2006. We are immensely sad that he is not sitting with us here today.

One year ago [on December 8] our captors threatened to execute us unless their demands were met. This ultimatum, unknown to us at the time, was a source of extreme distress for our families, friends and colleagues.

The deadline was extended to December 10, International Human Rights Day. On this day, people all over the world commemorate the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN General Assembly in 1948 by speaking out for all those whose human dignity is being violated by torture, arbitrary imprisonment, poverty, racism, oppression or war.

We understand a number of men alleged to be our captors have been apprehended, charged with kidnapping, and are facing trial in the Central Criminal Court of Iraq. We have been asked by the police in our respective countries to testify in the trial.

After much reflection upon our traditions, both Sikh and Christian, we want the world to know that we unconditionally forgive our captors for abducting and holding us. We have no desire to punish them. Punishment can never restore what was taken from us.

What our captors did was wrong. They caused us, our families and our friends great suffering. Yet we bear no malice towards them and have no wish for

ACTION for PALESTINE:

Call for Israeli Government Accountability Regarding Settler Violence. Recently CPTers in At-Tuwani and Hebron documented numerous violent attacks by Israeli settlers which Israeli soldiers and police on the scene ignored in each case. Please urge Israeli authorities to end their permissive tolerance for settler violence.

Incidents:

November 11, At-Tuwani – a group of adult male settlers from Ma'on attacked the school children from the village of Tuba. Israeli soldiers had ended their escort of the children moments earlier. No action was taken against the settlers.

November 18, Hebron – A crowd of 100 settlers attacked five international human rights monitors at an Israeli military checkpoint (see "Spotlight Tel Rumeida," p. 3). Israeli soldiers present took no action against the settlers.

November 19, At-Tuwani – 50 adult male settlers from Ma'on, some armed, attacked the village of Tuba, chasing the school children and sending villagers fleeing into the hills with their flocks. Israeli police found the settlers but made no arrests.

December 2, Hebron – a group of 8-10 young settler boys stoned and kicked a Palestinian boy walking to school, then threw stones at two Palestinian girls. Israeli soldiers witnessed the attack but took no action against the settler boys.

Sample Letter:

I have heard of repeated attacks by settlers from Hebron and the South Hebron Hills against unarmed Palestinians and internationals while Israeli soldiers and police stood by. It appears that the police and army are cooperating with settler violence. [Cite incidents here].

I am concerned that the military is failing in its mandate to protect the Palestinian school children from Tuba. I urge you to follow through on past promises to evacuate the Ma'on outpost.

If your government does not condone the violence of these settlers, I expect to hear that sufficient police resources have been assigned in the Hebron District to monitor and arrest any who threaten or assault their neighbors. I look forward to your reply.

Contact:

1) Prime Minister Ehud Olmert – Fax: 011-972-2-566-4838; www.pmo.gov.il/PMOEng/PM/Write-to-PM/; 2) Minister of Defense Amir Peretz – Fax: 011-972-3-697-6218; e-mail: sar@mod.gov.il; 3) Minister of Interior Roni Bar On – Fax: 011-972-2-566-6376; e-mail: sar@moin.gov.il. Send copies to your country's ambassador to Israel. Canada: Ambassador Jon Allen; Fax: 011-972-3-636-3380; e-mail: taviv@dfait-maeci.gc.ca; USA: Ambassador Richard H. Jones; Fax: 011-972-3-510-8093; e-mail: ac5@bezeqint.net.

COLOMBIA: NO BLOOD FOR GOLD!

The September 19 assassination of community leader Alejandro Uribe turned simmering discontent into organized protest for 1300 gold miners from 16 communities in Colombia's Southern Bolívar region. They marched for up to six hours on foot, then rode two more hours by truck, converging in the county seat of Santa Rosa (three hours north of Barrancabermeja) to demand justice. They called in observers from church and human rights agencies, the UN, and national and international civil society organizations, including CPT, to accompany the march.

Witnesses say Uribe was assassinated by members of the Nueva Granada Battalion of the 5th Brigade of the Colombian Army as he walked home from a community meeting. Two days later, soldiers warned frightened residents saying, "He won't be your only death. There will be more dead leaders."

The killing came after months of intensified military operations in the zone. Small-scale miners, who pry gold from the land with picks and shovels and smelt it in furnaces, claim the militarization is part of a campaign to intimidate and force residents off their land in order to make



room for the multinational company Anglo Gold Ashanti and its Colombian affiliate, Kedahda S.A. In fact, Colombian soldiers have told community members that their job is to clear the area for multinationals that wish to establish large, open pit mines.

On the evening of September 24, the miners organized a peaceful candlelight march through Santa Rosa. They paid homage to Alejandro Uribe and pledged to keep his spirit alive by continuing the nonviolent struggle for justice. They called upon the national government to thoroughly investigate Uribe's murder, stop army abuses, and ensure their land rights.



Miner's mobilization

Both government and military officials arrived by helicopter in Santa Rosa, but the miners stated clearly that they would only meet with civilian authorities. When the government insisted on the presence of the military at the meeting, the people took to the streets again. They occupied the central plaza, and the government officials left without a dialogue.

Rather than return to their homes, the miners decided to continue their nonviolent protests in Santa Rosa for as long as needed. Forty-five days and several rounds of negotiations later, they finally reached a nine-point accord with the government which included: 1) establishment of a special human rights unit of the national attorney general's office to investigate Alejandro Uribe's death; 2) insistence that Army units must obey the Colombian constitution and international law by respecting the distinction between civilians and combatants (in addition to the Colombian army,

both ELN and FARC guerrillas are active in the mining zone); 3) government recognition of the miners' organization (the Federation of Agro-miners of the South of Bolívar) as legal and legitimate.

CPTers were among those crammed into flatbed trucks accompanying the miners back to their homes. The joyful whoops and hollers of victory were tinged with skepticism, based on past experience, about the government's sincerity in fulfilling the accords.

As soon as the trucks reached the end of the road and the miners began walking the trails towards their homes, soldiers appeared. Some of them surrounded a small group of miners in a threatening manner, but then dispersed. Other soldiers handed out leaflets that encouraged guerrillas to turn in their weapons. The miners ripped up the leaflets immediately, infuriated at the insinuation that they were guerrillas.

Such actions and attitudes by the soldiers have fueled people's doubts about the seriousness of the government's promise to respect the people. But as one miner said, "If we need to die, we will be dying for a just cause."

CPT's January 17-30 delegation to Colombia will visit the mining zone to support the communities' efforts to defend their territory. Contact Claire Evans at delegations@cpt.org to participate.

ACTION: Canadian CPT supporters can join the Colombia Team in promoting the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability campaign for mandatory regulation of Canadian extractive industries operating in developing countries. The team pressed for increased corporate social responsibility from Canadian mining companies operating in Colombia at the Toronto and Montreal Canadian Government Roundtables this fall.

See the Colombia team's submissions at:
www.geo.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/current_discussions/csr-roundtables-en.asp
 For ways to get more involved, visit:
www.haitfaxinitiative.org/index.php/CNCA_Endorsements.

CPT TO VISIT PHILIPPINES

In January 2007 CPTers Elizabeth Garcia (Brownsville, TX), Gene Stoltzfus (Ft. Frances, ON) and Rey Lopez (Manila, Philippines) will explore ways to provide international support for Filipino violence-reduction initiatives.

Lopez reports that the level of lethal violence in the Philippines is on the rise. Filipino activists estimate that 700 people have been killed by government agents since 2001. A recent Amnesty International report says the killings should be a "deep embarrassment" to the Filipino government. Fear is mounting that, if these extra-judicial killings are not investigated and stopped, more people will resort to armed resistance.

The Philippine Islands lie at the center of the Malacca Strait. Much of the oil from the Middle East passes directly through the Strait on its way to the U.S. and Japan. The U.S. military, forced to vacate its bases in 1992 under swelling grassroots pressure, has now returned. The new Visiting Forces Agreement allows U.S. forces and equipment to be pre-positioned in any part of the Philippines, thus making the country a central piece of the U.S. war on terrorism and control over oil routes.

International visits such as CPT's, could help shine a light on this growing violence and provide support to local activists working nonviolently for peace.

MEXICO: OAXACA UNDER SIEGE

In response to an urgent request, CPT sent Reservists Matthew Wiens (Winnipeg, MB) and Chris Schweitzer (New Haven, CT) to provide short-term emergency support to civilians under threat in the southern Mexico state of Oaxaca (Wah-HAH-kah) in early December. Team members accompanied leaders from CACTUS (Centro de Apoyo Comunitario Trabajando Unidos - Center for United Community Support) who received death threats and faced possible arrest or disappearance in a government effort to quell massive popular resistance in the state.

"We organize women's collectives to make clothing and table cloths... What's wrong with that?" said Betty Cariño tearfully to a group of women in northern Oaxaca. Cariño, the director of CACTUS, explained the recent surge in government repression of the social movement for justice in this impoverished, primarily indigenous, state. She seemed to overflow with emotion at the injustice of being persecuted for this work of compassion.

CACTUS, a civil society organization committed to nonviolence, works with alternative education projects, women's rights, farmers and indigenous groups in the Sierra mountains of Oaxaca. CPTers accompanied Cariño and another CACTUS leader as they fled Oaxaca after Mexican authorities arrested several organizers from APPO (Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca / the Oaxaca Popular People's Assembly - a grassroots political organization representing 365 Oaxacan civil society groups). Many other leaders from APPO member organizations also went into hiding for a period of time.

Current tensions began to surface back in May 2006, when the Oaxaca teachers' union initiated a strike and nonviolent occupation of the central square in Oaxaca City, the state capitol. They demanded better pay and working conditions, improvements to the state's educational infrastructure and an end to human rights violations.

On June 7, 120,000 people turned out to support the teachers in the largest protest in Oaxaca's history. A week later, Oaxaca's governor, Ulises Ruiz, sent in helicopters and hundreds of police who beat and tear gassed the demonstrators in an unsuccessful attempt to drive them out of the central square.

The following morning, 300,000 citizens marched through the city to demand Ruiz's resignation. On June 17, they launched APPO as an alternative to the administration of Governor Ruiz.

Throughout the summer and fall, members of APPO continued to occupy the city's main square. Pro-government paramilitary forces and plain-clothed police officers responded with increasing levels of violence, killing a number of civilians including U.S.

DIALOGUE

In Dialogue, we highlight exchanges regarding CPT's vision and peacemaking ministry. In this issue we share from a discussion sparked by Reservist Erin Kindy's report of a 2½-day Undoing Racism workshop attended by 35 CPTers. The workshop, organized by CPT's Undoing Racism Working Group and facilitated by Damascus Road, helped us look at where we as an organization find ourselves in relation to racism. (See CPTNet, October 19, 2006; "Toronto/Chicago: Structural Racism and Christian Peacemaker Teams," archived at www.cpt.org)

Tom McCormick, Lincoln, NE: In your report I see no evidence of racism in CPT. I just see a perception that somehow CPT must be guilty of racism because CPT is white. Isn't that assumption a bit racist in itself? I certainly think that if there is evidence of racism within CPT, it should be discussed. Unless you have some hard evidence that racism really is a problem within CPT, as opposed to a prejudice you may have come up with for the sake of political correctness, I'd say you have more important things to do.

Erin Kindy, CPT Reservist, Tiskilwa, IL: CPT works in a variety of places and CPTers have experienced racism in different ways. Sometimes CPTers with darker skin have been excluded from participating in certain parts of CPT's work; some CPTers have experienced exclusion and others unearned privilege in terms of access within society and CPT as an organization; many of us are blind to ways that CPT as an organization has been shaped in racist ways.

CPT as an organization is situated in a society that has been constructed to give undue privileges to light-skinned people while denying such privilege to people with darker skin. Unless CPT consciously works

against that reality, we will inevitably follow that same racist model.

As I learn more about racism, I see that those of us with privileges tend to be blind to the fact that not everyone benefits as we do, and blind to how racism has shaped who we are and what is valued in this society.

Learning to dismantle racism is like seeing with new eyes. Cultivating the ability to view things from a different, and for me less-privileged, point of view, has shifted the way I look at the world. It is a deep, and at times painful, level of learning.

Richard Morony, Internet: Isn't it racial profiling to automatically assume that white people are racist? Why would one automatically start with the assumption that because one is Caucasian they are, in fact, racist?

Jocelyn Perry, CPT Reservist, New York, NY: Racism is an unjust pathology on which our current society is based – no one is immune. We have all suffered under systems where a select group of people, usually white and male, have made the decisions. U.S. and Canadian history taught in our schools was written by the "victors" over the "defeated." That version of history is what creates our identity. Many "white folks" just don't know Native American or African American history from the perspective of the "one who suffered." CPT is undertaking a wonderful effort to evolve!

CPT's Colombia Team, based in Barrancabermeja, Santander, provides regular accompaniment to communities in the Magdalena Medio region including the Ciénaga del Opón, Micoahumado, and the mining zone in southern Bolívar province. The development of a "Mobile Team" has increased CPT's capacity to respond to invitations for emergency accompaniment in different parts of the country, such as the Awa indigenous communities of Nariño in southwestern Colombia.

COLOMBIA: "SITUATION CRITICAL"

CPT's Mobile Team recently began an eight-week accompaniment project with the Awa (pronounced ah-WAH) indigenous communities of Nariño in southwestern Colombia.

On August 9, World Indigenous Day, the Awa people suffered a massacre of five community leaders by unknown assailants. The community has been enduring a surge in violence since last July, when military operations in its territory forced members to displace under life-threatening conditions.

"The situation continues to be critical," said Olivio Bisbicú, president of the indigenous community organization, UNIPA. "The community is living all together in whatever areas they can find – public buildings, makeshift plastic tarp tents, etc."

The war in this region has worsened in the last several years with the U.S. military funding package, Plan Colombia. The early part of this decade saw a steady increase in military, paramilitary, and guerrilla activity in the Awa's traditional territory resulting in massacres, assassinations, disappearances, forced displacements, and rampant fumigations of food crops.

The violence against this community did not begin there, however. Mainstream Colombian society has long marginalized the Awa, depriving them of opportunities for cultural and economic well-being. Nevertheless, they have sustained their culture, and strive to strengthen it, in the midst of civil war.

CPTers hope to make visible the grievous situation that the Awa community currently faces and to support

their grassroots organizing efforts to confront and transform the violence by all armed groups which threaten their way of life.

COLOMBIA: HISTORICAL MEMORY

In mid-September, CPTers organized a workshop for 20 women who have suffered human rights abuses as a result of the Colombian armed conflict.

The workshop, held in Barrancabermeja, focused on the importance of documenting human rights violations in order to make visible the ways in which armed conflict affects women specifically, and in order to preserve their collective historical memory. Historical memory helps people realize that human rights violations are not normal.

Participants came from a variety of women's organizations, human rights groups, and social agencies from nearby towns and cities including Bucaramanga, Yondó, and Puerto Wilches. Seven of those attending were from the Opón communities.

The women discussed the different armed groups involved in perpetrating human rights abuses, the kinds of violence they have suffered and the effects of the violence in their lives. They shared stories of forced displacement, death threats, sexual assault, verbal abuse, assassination of a spouse or child, roadblocks, checkpoints, and the unwanted presence of armed groups in their homes. They noted effects such as psychiatric disorders, health problems, lack of confidence in the justice system, poverty, and a sense of being forgotten by the State.

Workshop leaders presented a format for documentation of historical memory which included interviews with the victim, the community, people connected to the victim or community, and other sources, such as the press.

This workshop was one step in a CPT project to document and preserve the historical memory of the Opón region where the team has maintained a permanent accompaniment since 2001.

CPTers serving the Colombia Team September-November were: Michele Bradley (Minneapolis, MN), Robin Buyers (Toronto, ON - Project Support Coordinator), Suzanna Colled (River Forest, IL), Noah Dillard (Freedom, ME), Nils Dybvig (Minneapolis, MN), Duane Ediger (Chicago, IL), Jim Fitz (Tiskitwa, IL), Julian Gutiérrez (Colombia), Lisa Hughes (Portland, OR), Erin Kinky (Tiskitwa, IL), Joel Klassen (Toronto, ON), Kim Lamberg (Washington, DC), Pierre Shantz (Colombia), Stewart Vriesinga (Lucknow, ON), Shirley Way (Stanley, NY)



Leader from the small village of Sange

Participants in CPT's October 18 - November 4 delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo were: Fatuma Alinoti (Ypsilanti, MI), Nancy Almqvist (Mt. Ranier, MD), Judy Amunga (Nairobi, Kenya), Sharon Gosson (Whetstone, IL), Tracy Hughes (Miami, FL), Ujain Lee (Seattle, WA), Wendy Lehman and Sara Reschly (Chicago, IL), Mawazo Kaluya Esperance (Uvira, DRC), Sandra Rincon (Madrid, Colombia), Antingna Bibiane Tshetu (New York, NY)

CONGO: WOMEN WANT PEACE

by Sara Reschly

"We have been killed and maimed, but we are still fighting and working for change," said Maurice Namwira, Director of the Bukavu human rights group, Heritiers de la Justice (Inheritors of Justice).

A CPT delegation of 11 women spent two weeks in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) meeting with women's organizations, churches, and human rights groups. After learning firsthand how Congolese women have been affected by the conflict, delegates hope to support efforts towards peace and change by amplifying the women's voices in the international community.

Since 1998, over four million Congolese have died due to a conflict that has involved over eight African countries and rebel militia groups. At the heart of the conflict is control of the DRC's natural resources which include gold, diamonds, copper, cobalt, and 80% of the world's coltan ore, a necessary mineral used in making computers and cell phones.

The UN Development Fund for Women estimates that hundreds of thousands of women have been raped since the conflict began. But the real miracle witnessed by the CPT women's delegation was survival. While delegates heard story after story of brutal rape and suffering, they also heard story after story of survival, not only on an individual level, but on a collective level as well.

Sophisticated, articulate and effective women's organizations have sprung to life in the cities and rural areas to diligently document human rights violations. One such organization, the Collective Associations of Women's Groups for the Empowerment of Women - C/AFECEF (Collectif des Associations des femmes Cadres pour l'Epanouissement intégral de la Femme) - described how difficult it was to publicize these stories. Often they were required to hide the documents in their dresses and ride bikes to deliver the reports, or leave the messages under rocks for other women to pick up. Eventually the documents were delivered to news outlets and international human rights organizations.

Each year on International Women's Day (March 8) the women of C/AFECEF go into the streets and march for women's rights. In 2000, they marked March 8 as the International Day Without Women by remaining home to protest the systematic raping of women. This action effectively drew the attention of many news agencies and international organizations to the plight of Congolese women.

Congolese women are also organizing to provide direct services to rape survivors. Four women and the pastor of the Lutheran church in Bukavu serve 250 women, holding two prayer and traumatization meetings each week and making weekly home visits. Congregation members host rape survivors driven from their homes, and work on reconciliation between survivors and their families - nearly 90% are rejected by their husbands.

Towards the end of the delegation at a meeting in Uvira, an elderly woman said, "As mothers, we are so tired of war. We want peace. Please go tell other women about the situation in the Congo. Go and lobby for an end to this war."

CONGO: "THE UNLIKELY LOT"

by Ujain Lee

"We were the unlikely lot and that is precisely why God has chosen us." - Desmond Tutu

How can we, an unlikely lot of women representing families and communities in Kenya, Colombia, Congo and the U.S., put words to the trauma we have been witness to during these days in Eastern Congo?

For some of us, our knowledge of the sexual violence perpetrated against women in Congo began only a few months ago. For two delegates, this trip was a homecoming, a reunion with their motherland, a response to the hurting needs of their own people. For one woman, these encounters are an intensely raw confirmation that the violence she experiences within her community of Uvira has been happening all over Congo since conflict tore into the country ten years ago.

What exactly did we hear? Women in Congo are systematically raped as a weapon of warfare. One 42-year-old woman told her story: "I was raped by the Interhamwe [a Hutu militia group largely responsible for the Rwandan genocide]. My husband and son were murdered in front of me. I was forced to live with the Interhamwe in the forest as their sex slave." She now lives alone with twelve children, four of whom are fathered by Interhamwe. She feels an acute burden of shame and ostracism.

Each of us knew this time in Congo would be challenging, painful, traumatic. But these words are not enough to describe what we heard in the voices and saw in the eyes of Congolese women. There is rage. There is fear. There is confusion and loss. But the overarching, consistent message from rural women in Uvira to educated women in the city of Bukavu, has been a plea for peace.

One woman from the village of Bunia-Kiri said, "All we are asking for is peace. Please fight for us to have the dignity that you have, which is a dignity that we deserve."

View the delegation's full trip report and photos at www.cpi.org/africa/africa.php. To learn more about multinational corporations complicit in fueling the conflict in the Congo, see: www.commondreams.org/headlines/02/10/22-07.htm www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/world/2006/09/350129.html www.joe.org/new/releases/84drccomplaint.html



Meeting with women of Lavungu near Uvira.